

I appreciate the Senate's efforts to preserve the integrity of State law and protect our Nation's families. I look forward to the House and Senate resolving their differences in conference and sending this legislation for my signature.

NOTE: The statement referred to S. 403.

Proclamation 8037—Anniversary of the Americans With Disabilities Act, 2006

July 25, 2006

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has helped fulfill the promise of America for millions of individuals living with disabilities. The anniversary of this landmark legislation is an important opportunity to celebrate our progress over the last 16 years and the many contributions individuals with disabilities make to our country.

When President George H. W. Bush signed the ADA into law on July 26, 1990, he called this legislation a "dramatic renewal not only for those with disabilities but for all of us, because along with the precious privilege of being an American comes a sacred duty to ensure that every other American's rights are also guaranteed." The ADA's far-reaching reforms have played a significant role in enhancing the quality of life for millions of Americans who must overcome considerable challenges each day in order to participate fully in all aspects of American life.

My Administration continues to build on the progress of the ADA through the New Freedom Initiative. We have established an online connection to the Federal Government's disability-related information and resources at DisabilityInfo.gov, and the job training and placement services of the "Ticket to Work" program and One-Stop Career Centers are promoting greater employment opportunities. We are also expanding educational opportunities for children with disabilities, providing them with the tools they need for success in their classrooms, homes,

and communities. In addition, we are fostering technological advancement and encouraging increased distribution of assistive technology to help people with disabilities live and work with greater independence. My Administration will continue its efforts to remove barriers confronting Americans with disabilities and their families so that every individual can realize their full potential.

On this anniversary of the ADA, we underscore our commitment to ensuring that the fundamental promises of our democracy are accessible to all our citizens. As we strive to be a more caring and hopeful society, let us continue to show the character of America in our compassion for one another.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim July 26, 2006, as a day in celebration of the 16th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. I call on all Americans to celebrate the many contributions of individuals with disabilities as we work towards fulfilling the promise of the ADA to give all our citizens the opportunity to live with dignity, work productively, and achieve their dreams.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fifth day of July, in the year of our Lord two thousand six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-first.

George W. Bush

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NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on July 28.

Remarks at a Lunch With Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq and Military Personnel at Fort Belvoir, Virginia

July 26, 2006

President Bush. Thank you all for such gracious hospitality. I thought I would drop by with the Prime Minister of Iraq. [*Laughter*] I wanted him to be with some of the

finest citizens in the United States of America.

I appreciate our Ambassador to Iraq joining us today, Zal Khalilzad. Mr. Ambassador, thank you for coming. Ambassador Sumaydi, from Iraq to the United States, is with us. Ambassador, thank you for coming. I appreciate the Members of the United States Senate who have joined us, Senator Warner and Senator Allen. Thank you all for being here. I appreciate you joining us. I want to thank Congressman Jim Moran and Congressman Tom Davis for joining us.

Mr. Prime Minister, obviously, Members of the United States Congress are interested in you. [*Laughter*] They're also interested in the United States military. And they know what I know, that anytime we've got a man or woman in uniform in harm's way, they deserve all the possible support necessary to complete the mission.

I want to thank Colonel Lauritzen and all the folks who made this visit possible. It's an honor to be here, and it's an honor to be with the family members of our troops.

Mr. Prime Minister, when I speak to our troops, I also talk to their loved ones, because you can't have a strong United States military without the support of the military families. Our troops have sacrificed, and as they have done so, so have our military families. And so today we pay respect for the men and women who wear the uniform and their loved ones. We're proud of you.

There's no better place to come than Fort Belvoir, Mr. Prime Minister, because here there are some 120 military commands representing the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard—all branches of the United States military who have served with distinction in fighting the terrorists who would like to do us harm and prevent your good country from becoming a democracy.

I tell our folks that success in Iraq is necessary for the security of the United States, and it's necessary for the peace of the world. One of the things that—one of the lessons we can learn from history is that freedom and liberty and democracies have got the capacity to convert enemies into allies and to lay the foundation for peace.

Now, Mr. Prime Minister, we were deeply moved when 12 million of your citizens went

to the polls last December. It was really a remarkable statement, wasn't it? Twelve million citizens, who at one time had lived under the thumb of a brutal tyrant, went to the polls and said, "We want to be free." And out of that election, Mr. Prime Minister, you and your Government have emerged.

We respect the fact that your Government represents the will of the Iraqi people. One thing the Prime Minister told me getting out of the limousine, after having flown on the helicopter—[*laughter*—was that he longs for the day when the Iraqi children can live in a hopeful society. That's what he wants. He wants the Iraqi people to enjoy the benefits that most people in other countries enjoy. It is a simple concept in many ways, yet is profound, because my reaction upon hearing his words was, this man will succeed if he cares first and foremost about the people and the condition of the Iraqi people. If he's the kind of leader like I know he is, who cares about generations of Iraqis to come, he will be successful.

We've got hard work to do together, Mr. Prime Minister. We were talking here at the table, and I was commenting that it's amazing, isn't it, where some people decide to kill innocent lives to stop freedom. And frankly, that's a hard concept for some of us to understand. But I understand this: that in order for freedom to succeed, those folks have got to be brought to justice. They cannot be allowed to kill the innocent.

And that's why we've sent some of our finest citizens to help you, Mr. Prime Minister. We want you to succeed. It's in our Nation's interest that you succeed. And I'm confident we will succeed. The Prime Minister came, and he didn't say this directly to me, but I could tell by looking in my eyes, he wanted to make sure that this was a President who kept his word. I've told the Iraqi people, we stand with you, and that no matter how tough it gets, we will complete this mission. We owe it to those who have served in combat. We owe it to those who have lost a limb. We owe it to those who have lost a life.

Fort Belvoir lost a good man recently in Sergeant First Class Scott Smith. He was killed by an IED. He helped save lives. He helped lay that foundation for peace. And in honor of his memory and in the memory of

others who have gone before him, in honor of the thousands of Iraqis who have died at the hands of terrorists, we will complete the mission. It's in our interest, Mr. Prime Minister, that we succeed together.

And so I've asked you to come, to be in the midst of those who have served our country. The amazing thing about our military is that people have had to say, "I want to serve." Every person you see here in uniform, Mr. Prime Minister, has volunteered to serve the United States of America. And in so doing, they have set a fantastic example for generations to come, and they have made the United States of America incredibly proud.

So I'd like to welcome you to the podium, Mr. Prime Minister. And as you come up here and look at the folks here in uniform, you've got to know how proud their Commander in Chief is to be able to serve alongside of them as we do our duty with honor for our country.

Mr. Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Maliki. I would like to thank the President for his invitation. And I would also like to thank the Members of Congress who are with us today here—and to the sons and families of the Armed Forces who are here with us in this celebration. When I stand here in front of you and I salute you, I would like to appreciate what you have done and what you have achieved.

I appreciate your colleagues who offered their lives on the land of Iraq, and I tell you that Iraqis will never forget these sacrifices because they have really participated in ridding Iraq of dictatorship, one of the ugliest regimes that the region has known. And we are happy to be partners in this holy task of fighting terrorism and establishing democracy.

Iraq, because of what you have offered, because of what your sons have offered, your families have offered, has now moved from dictatorship to democracy; from oppression, torture chambers, chemical weapons, and now into a space of freedom, liberty, and partnership; from depravation and absolute poverty into the condition where we now are looking forward to economic prosperity, because Iraq is a rich country, and the previous regime has wasted all the wealth of Iraq in his adventures.

I sympathize with those who made sacrifices, and I sympathize with the families who have lost some loved ones. And I appreciate this sacrifice and this suffering, because I am one of the people who sacrificed and suffered in Iraq. The previous regime had sentenced me to death and actually has executed 67 members of my family and relatives. And I can feel the bitterness of the loss when someone loses a dear member of his family, a son or a spouse.

When blood mixes together in the field, aiming to achieve one goal, this blood will help in establishing long-lasting relationship between us. Our relationship will stay forever.

Terrorists still carry out, on daily basis, these crazy actions against innocent civilians: their suicide bombs, their car bombs against the innocent civilians who have nothing to do with the conflict in Iraq. They want to kill democracy as they kill humans. But they will definitely fail, because we are committed to success, and we are committed to democracy. And the daily killing does not prevent Iraqis from carrying out and going along with their daily lives. And we are confident that we will succeed, because you and people like you are helping us to confront terrorism—terrorism that is spreading in our land—with foreign support.

Lastly, on behalf of myself and on behalf of the Iraqi people, I would like to thank you and thank your families. I would like to appreciate your losses, your sacrifices, appreciate the bitterness of those who have lost loved ones. I hope that you can go past your losses, and I hope that you can compensate it with—compensate it about what's happened.

And we feel pain and sorrow for every drop of blood that falls in Iraq. But once again, we give you all the salute—we salute you, and we thank you very much for all that you've offered to Iraq.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:17 p.m. at the Fort Belvoir Community Club. In his remarks, he referred to Iraq's Ambassador to the U.S. Samir Shakir al-Sumaydi; Col. Brian W. Lauritzen, USA, garrison commander, Ft. Belvoir; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. Prime Minister Maliki spoke in Arabic, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

**Statement on House of
Representatives Action on the
“Expanding American
Homeownership Act of 2006”**

July 26, 2006

I am pleased the House passed the “Expanding American Homeownership Act of 2006.”

The Federal Housing Administration has helped millions of Americans become homeowners in communities throughout our country. I appreciate the House’s efforts to modernize this important program to ensure that it reflects the demands of today’s marketplace and addresses the current needs of potential home buyers. By providing the FHA with increased flexibility for mortgage downpayment requirements and the authority to tailor financing to suit a family’s unique situation, this bill will improve FHA’s ability to help lower and moderate-income families achieve the American Dream.

I encourage the Senate to join the House and pass this critical legislation.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 5121.

**Remarks on Signing the Fannie Lou
Hamer, Rosa Parks, and Coretta
Scott King Voting Rights Act
Reauthorization and Amendments
Act of 2006**

July 27, 2006

Thank you. Good morning. Welcome. Thanks for being here on this special day. Please be seated. America began with a declaration that all men are created equal. This declaration marked a tremendous advance in the story of freedom, yet it also contained a contradiction: Some of the same men who signed their names to this self-evident truth owned other men as property. By reauthorizing this act, Congress has reaffirmed its belief that all men are created equal, its belief that the new founding started by the signing of the bill by President Johnson is worthy of our great Nation to continue.

I’m proud to be here with our Attorney General, members of my Cabinet, leaders of the United States Senate and House of Rep-

resentatives. I thank the bill sponsors. I thank the members of the Judiciary Committee. I appreciate so very much representatives of the Hamer family who have joined us, representatives of the Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute who have joined us, and members of the King family, in particular Reverend Bernice King and Martin Luther King. Thank you all for coming.

I’m honored to be here with civil rights leaders like Dr. Dorothy Height, Julian Bond, the chairman of the NAACP. Bruce Gordon, thank you, Bruce. Reverend Lowery, it’s good to see you again, sir—fortunately, I got the mic this time. *[Laughter]* I’m proud to be here with Marc Morial. Thanks for coming, Marc. Juanita Abernathy is with us today. Jesse Jackson, good to see you, Jesse. Al Sharpton, Dr. Benjamin Hooks and Frances are with us. A lot of other folks who care deeply about this issue—we welcome you here.

It’s good to welcome the mayor. Mr. Mayor, good to see you. Thanks for coming—Tony Williams. Everything is fine in the neighborhood; I appreciate it. *[Laughter]* And the mayor of Selma, Alabama, James Perkins, is with us. Mr. Mayor, proud you’re here. Welcome, sir.

The right of ordinary men and women to determine their own political future lies at the heart of the American experiment, and it is a right that has been won by the sacrifice of patriots. The Declaration of Independence was born on the stand for liberty taken at Lexington and Concord. The amendments to our Constitution that outlawed slavery and guaranteed the right to vote came at the price of a terrible civil war.

The Voting Rights Act that broke the segregationist lock on the ballot box rose from the courage shown on a Selma bridge one Sunday afternoon in March of 1965. On that day, African Americans, including a Member of the United States Congress, John Lewis, marched across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in a protest intended to highlight the unfair practices that kept them off the voter rolls.

The brutal response showed America why a march was necessary. When the marchers reached the far side of the bridge, they were met by State troopers and civilian posse bearing billy clubs and whips—weapons they did